

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

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INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USUN NEW YORK 606

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MV, US

1. SUMMARY: AFTER PRESENTING CREDENTIALS AUGUST 21, AMBASSADOR REED DISCUSSED VARIOUS MATTERS WITH MALDIVIAN PRESIDENT. AMONG THEM WERE: REOPENING OF MALDIVIAN UN MISSION AND WHETHER WASHINGTON EMBASSY MIGHT NOT ALSO BE OPENED; U.S.G.'S APPRECIATION OF MALDIVIAN RESERVATION ON NAM SUMMIT'S KOREAN RESOLUTION; GAN ISLAND; AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN AIR MALDIVES, ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL MATTERS; AND MALDIVIAN STUDENTS IN BEIRUT. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS TO PRESIDENT NASIR OF MALDIVES MORNING OF AUGUST 23 (SEPTTEL), AMBASSADOR REED HAD 20 MINUTE CONVERSATION WITH THE PRESIDENT AT WHICH NUMBER OF MATTERS WERE DISCUSSED. AMBASSADOR LED OFF BY EXPRESSING OUR APPRECIATION OF THE CORDIAL RELATIONS WHICH HAVE EXISTED BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES SINCE THEY BECAME AN INDEPENDENT NATION
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IN 1965. THE AMBASSADOR SAID IT WOULD BE HIS GOAL TO

MAINTAIN THIS GOOD RELATIONSHIP AND THE PRESIDENT RESPONDED THAT OUR RELATIONS HAD INDEED BEEN GOOD AND HE SAW NO REASON NOT TO CONTINUE ON THIS BASIS.

3. MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: THE AMBASSADOR SAID WE ARE PLEASED THAT THE MALDIVES ARE GOING TO REOPEN THEIR MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS. HE SUGGESTED THAT WE WOULD ALSO BE VERY PLEASED IF THEY WOULD CONSIDER FAVORABLY THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THEIR EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON AT THE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL. THE AMBASSADOR TOLD PRESIDENT NASIR OF THE U.S. SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE'S INTEREST IN RESPECT TO THIS MATTER. THE PRESIDENT RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO THE SUGGESTION IN SAYING "THIS WOULD BE KILLING TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE." THE AMBASSADOR THEN CONGRATULATED THE PRESIDENT ON THE MALDIVES' ENTRY TO THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AS A FULL MEMBER AND EXPRESSED THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S DEEP APPRECIATION THAT THE MALDIVES' REGISTERED A RESERVATION ON THE KOREAN RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT.

4. GAN ISLAND: AMBASSADOR REED INQUIRED REGARDING THE STATUS OF THE FORMER ROYAL AIR FORCE STAGING FACILITY ON GAN ISLAND IN ADDU ATOLL WHICH THE BRITISH HAD LEFT IN MARCH 1976. PRESIDENT NASIR SAID THAT NO FINAL DECISION HAD BEEN MADE IN RESPECT TO THE EVENTUAL USE OF GAN. HE INDICATED THAT THE FACILITY WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE TURNED OVER TO ANOTHER COUNTRY TO OPERATE AS A MILITARY FACILITY.

5. AIR MALDIVES: IN RESPONSE TO THE AMBASSADOR'S INQUIRY REGARDING THE STATUS OF THE AMERICAN-REGISTERED TRI-9 CORPORATION'S ARRANGEMENT TO OPERATE AIR MALDIVES, THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT NEGOTIATIONS WERE CONTINUING BUT IT APPEARED TO HIM THAT TRI-9 HAD A QUESTIONABLE FINANCIAL RECORD AND THAT THIS HAS DELAYED FINALIZING THE AGREEMENT.

6. ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL MATTERS: THE EXCELLENT PROGRESS BEING MADE BY THE MALDIVIAN SHIPPING LINE

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WAS DISCUSSED. PRESIDENT NASIR NOTED THAT THE MALDIVIAN SHIPPING LINE HAD JUST RECENTLY PURCHASED TWO TANKERS AND THEY PLAN TO TRANSPORT MOST OF THEIR PETROLEUM NEEDS DIRECTLY FROM THE MIDDLE EAST. AT THE PRESENT TIME, THEY ARE PURCHASING THESE SUPPLIES FROM SRI LANKA AND THE PRESIDENT BELIEVES CONSIDERABLE SAVINGS CAN BE EFFECTED AS A RESULT OF THIS CHANGE. AMBASSADOR REED MENTIONED THAT THE

EMBASSY WOULD BE PLEASED TO PROVIDE FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE'S ASSISTANCE IN ANY MATTERS THEY MIGHT WISH TO TAKE UP REGARDING TRADE POSSIBILITIES AND ALSO WITH THE OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION. THE PRESIDENT THANKED THE AMBASSADOR AND SAID HE WOULD AVAIL HIMSELF OF THE OFFER IF THE NEED AROSE. THE AMBASSADOR ALSO MENTIONED THE PL 480 COMMODITIES PROGRAM AND INQUIRED WHETHER THE MALDIVIANS WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THE PURCHASE OF RICE OR WHEAT. PRESIDENT NASIR INDICATED THAT HE MIGHT BE INTERESTED AND ASKED FOR DETAILS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION.

7. MALDIVIAN STUDENTS AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT (AUB): THE STATUS OF THE TWO MALDIVIAN STUDENTS STILL ATTENDING AUB UNDER AID SCHOLARSHIPS WAS REVIEWED. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT BECAUSE THE STUDENTS HAD ONLY A SHORT TIME TO GO TO COMPLETE THEIR STUDIES, THEY HAD DECIDED TO STAY ON IN BEIRUT RATHER THAN RETURN HOME. THEIR DECISION, HE SAID, WOULD OF COURSE BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE IN THE EVENT CONDITIONS IN BEIRUT CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE.
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